

SPRING FOOTBALL: 10 THINGS TO WATCH

Aggieland ILLUSTRATED

Mark Turgeon

THE COACH,
HUSBAND
AND FATHER
OF THREE

ALSO INSIDE:

Dude Perfect Panda
Aggie Basketball
Coach Jo Evans
Big 12 Baseball
Macie Morrow
Caroline Gunn
2011 Recruits
John Stilson

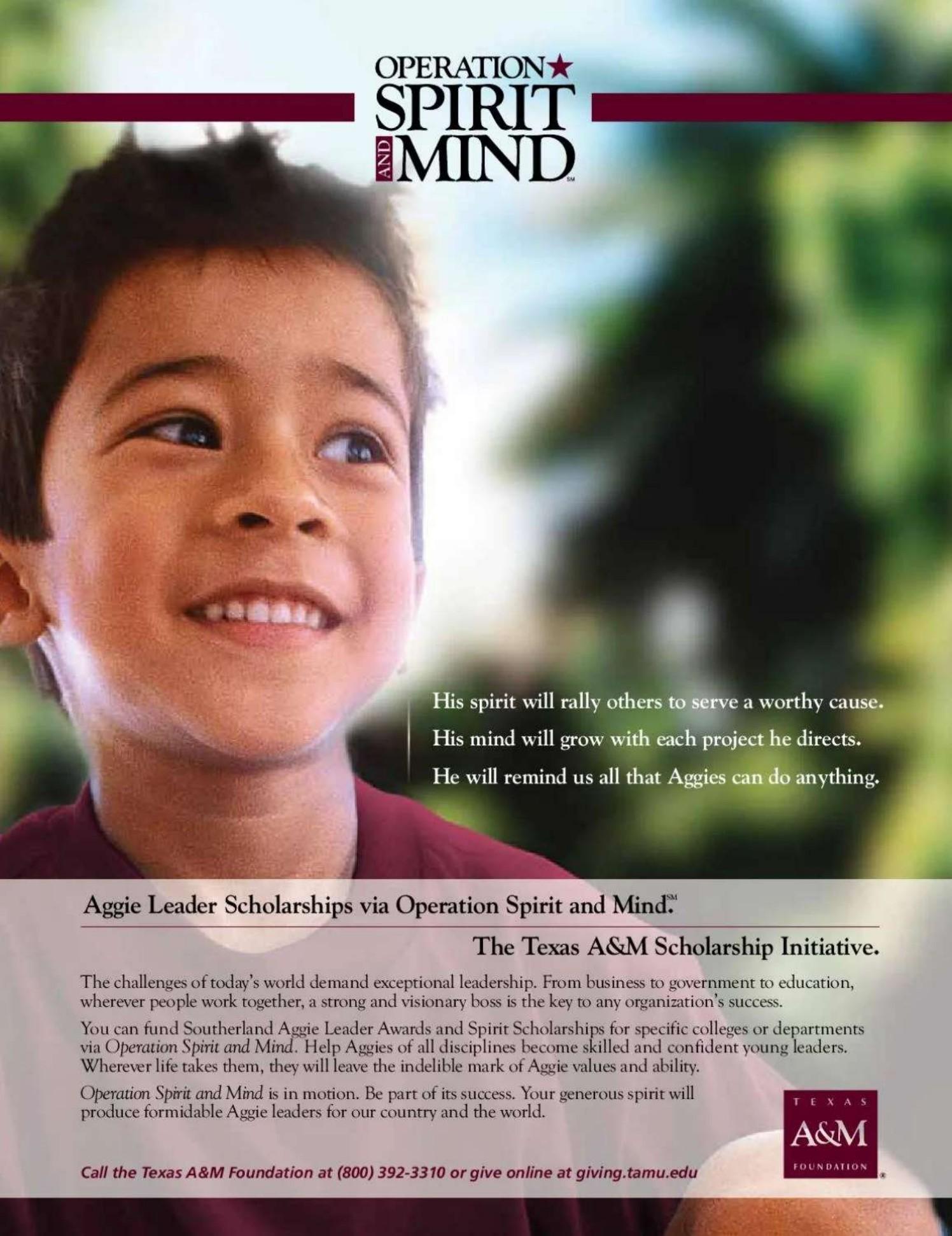


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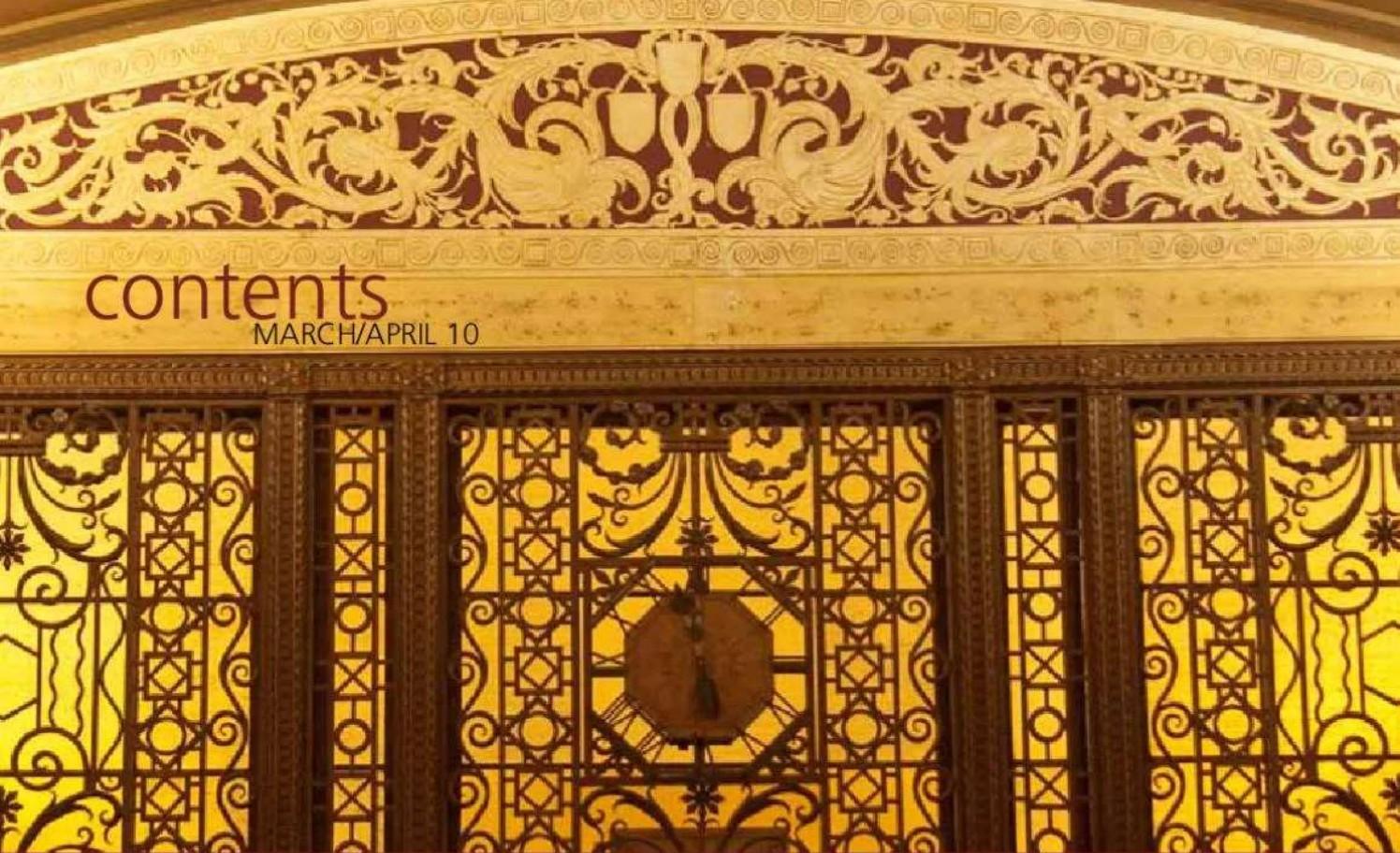
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publisher's note

Howdy!

What an unbelievable season of Texas A&M basketball. It still amazes me how far both programs have come over the past few years.

I'm writing this letter just hours after the women lost a heart-breaker to Gonzaga in the second round of the NCAA tournament. Fresh off a Big 12 tournament championship, Gary Blair's squad looked capable of making a run for the program's first Final Four. However, Gonzaga pulled off a hard-fought victory. I still don't understand how it's fair that they – a No. 7 seed – got to basically play a home game against the second seeded Ags.

Meanwhile, I'm still trying to cope with the men's disheartening loss in overtime to Purdue. The Ags were so close to a Sweet 16 matchup against Duke in Houston that they could probably taste it. I know I could. Despite the adversity they faced, Mark Turgeon's team continually exceeded expectations all season long. That was certainly enough reason to believe they would get by Purdue and set up a marquee matchup against the Blue Devils in front of a likely record number of Aggies. Without a doubt this loss hurts deeply, but it's difficult to be disappointed in what these guys accomplished. Mostly, I'm just sad that their season had to end like that – especially the seniors.

Speaking of seniors, Derrick Roland recently decided to seek a medical hardship so that he could return next season. He doesn't automatically qualify under the current rules – he played a few too many games – but I think this is a perfect opportunity for the NCAA to make a statement that if a student-athlete does all the right things – both in sports and in the classroom – then they deserve to be rewarded. Who knows what will happen, but I know if anyone deserves it, D-Ro does.

Finally, I'm disappointed that basketball season is over, but that means it's time to reveal AI's annual Big 12 Awards. We also thought it would be fun to name our A&M All-Decade team.

Gig'em Ags!

Brian '01

AI AWARDS

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

G Donald Sloan, Texas A&M

BEST DEFENDER

F Cole Aldrich, Kansas

FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR

G Tommy Mason-Griffin, Oklahoma

MOST IMPROVED

F Bryan Davis, Texas A&M

COACH OF THE YEAR

Mark Turgeon, Texas A&M

ALL-BIG 12 TEAM

G Tweety Carter, Baylor

G Sherron Collins, Kansas*

G Donald Sloan, Texas A&M

G/F James Anderson, Oklahoma State*

F Craig Brackins, Iowa State

A&M ALL-DECade TEAM

G Acie Law, IV

G Dominique Kirk

G/F Bernard King

G/F Antoine Wright

F Joseph Jones

*repeat selection from last season

P.S. You can order back issues of *Aggieland Illustrated* online at www.aggielandillustrated.com/archive.html

Aggieland ILLUSTRATED

EDITORIAL

Brian Davis '01
Publisher/Editor
brian@aggiemag.com

Jeremy Ksionda '04 Jason McConnell '01
Managing Editor Associate Editor/Photo Editor
jeremy@aggiemag.com jason@aggiemag.com

ADVERTISING

Rob Havens '88
Advertising Sales Manager
(979) 229-8046
rob@aggiemag.com

PRODUCTION/CIRCULATION

Kimberly Davis '01 Sunnye Davis
kim@aggiemag.com sunye@aggiemag.com

COPY EDITORS

Shawn Kruse '02 Katie McConnell '09
bowlerfox@aggiemag.com katie@aggiemag.com

PERSONAL SHOPPER

Stacey Ksionda '05
stacey@aggiemag.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Gentry "Scoop" Woodard
scoop@aggiemag.com

Scott Clendenin '89 Lyssa Hamilton '99
scott@aggiemag.com lyssa@aggiemag.com

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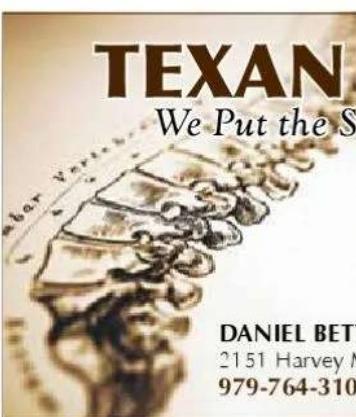
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snapshot

A dynamic basketball game is captured in mid-action. In the foreground, a player from the visiting team, wearing a white jersey with the number 21 and maroon stripes, is leaping towards the basket. His right arm is extended, and his left hand holds a basketball. He is looking intently at the rim. On the left side of the frame, a large, dark red wooden pillar stands prominently. The words "TEXAS A&M" are carved vertically into its surface. To the right of the pillar, another player from the visiting team is partially visible, also in mid-air. In the background, a massive crowd of spectators, mostly young people, is cheering from the bleachers. Many in the crowd are wearing white shirts, some featuring maroon lettering or symbols. The gymnasium floor is a polished wood, and a basketball hoop is visible at the top left of the frame. The overall atmosphere is energetic and competitive.

TEXAS A&M

outstretched

Sophomore Dash Harris tries to disrupt a three-point attempt by Oklahoma State's James Anderson. The Aggies never trailed against the Cowboys on senior night, winning 76-61. Harris contributed 8 points with 6 assists and tied his career-high with 8 rebounds.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.





AMERSON

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PUGRIM

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snapshot

going, going, gone

Junior Caleb Shofner homers over the right field wall – his team-best fifth of the year – in the second game against Washington State. Trailing 7-0 to the Cougars in the sixth inning, A&M mounted a furious comeback attempt led by Shofner's 3-run blast. The Ags came up a little short though, losing 7-5.

Photo by Jason McConnell '01.



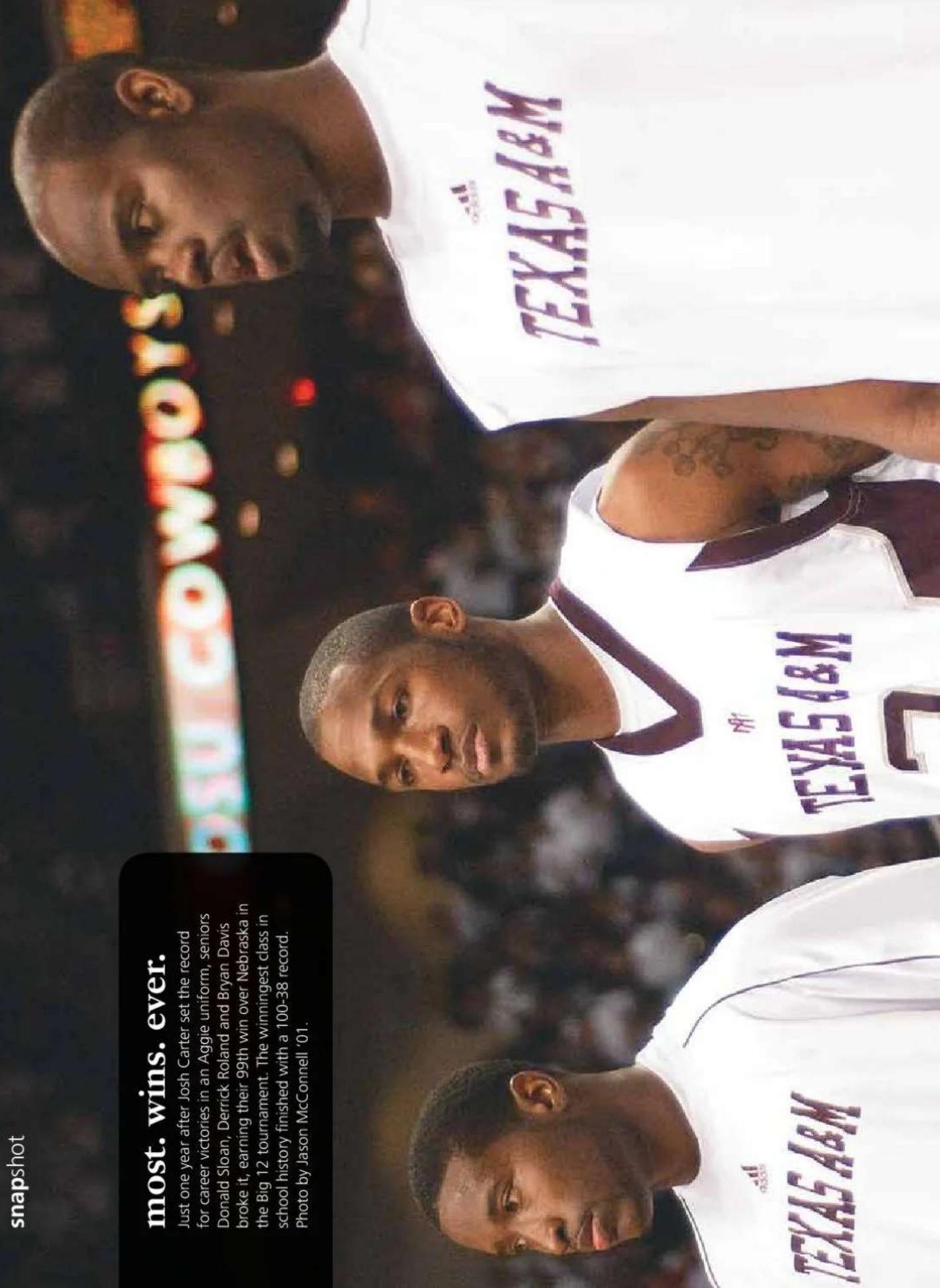


snapshot

most. wins. ever.

Just one year after Josh Carter set the record for career victories in an Aggie uniform, seniors Donald Sloan, Derrick Roland and Bryan Davis broke it, earning their 99th win over Nebraska in the Big 12 tournament. The winningest class in school history finished with a 100-38 record. Photo by Jason McConnell '01.

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getting offensive

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

With the 2010 class signed, sealed and delivered, the speculation surrounding the class of '11 is officially underway. In his first three signing classes as Texas A&M's head coach, Mike Sherman pushed the 25 scholarship limit to the max, signing at least that many each year. As a result, the 2011 class will probably be limited by scholarship numbers and is likely to cap out at 18-20 depending on any unforeseen attrition.

Here, we take a closer look at the Aggies' top prospects on the offensive side of the ball with the help of Billy Liucci's *Maroon & White Report* at texags.com. Check back in the May/June issue of AI for the defensive prospects.

QB (0-1)

TARGETS:

- QB J.W. Walsh (Denton Guyer)
 - Committed to Oklahoma St.
- QB David Ash (Belton)
 - Committed to Texas
- QB Dexter Foreman (Manvel)
- QB Johnny Manziel (Kerrville Tivy)
- QB Ryan Polite (DeSoto)
- QB Brett Hundley (Chandler, Arizona)



KEEP AN EYE ON: Kerrville Tivy's **Johnny Manziel**. While probably not a QB at the next level, this jack-of-all-trades athlete has the attention of college scouts across the region.

PROGNOSIS: After signing three prospects in the class of 2010, the Aggies will probably be selective in their quest for a signal caller in 2011. Arizona's Brett Hundley looks like to be the top prospect early on, but with offers from all over the country, he's likely headed elsewhere. Still, a senior campaign to remember from Jerrod Johnson would help the Ags in the eyes of recruits all across the country, so nothing's out of the question.

RB (1-2)

TARGETS:

- RB Malcolm Brown (Cibolo Steele)
- RB Aaron Green (San Antonio Madison)
- RB Herschel Sims (Abilene)
- RB Brandon Williams (Brookshire Royal)
 - Committed to Baylor
- RB Kenny Williams (Pflugerville Hendrickson)
- RB LaFrederick Ford (Kirbyville)
 - Committed to Texas
- RB KC Nlemechi (Katy Cinco Ranch)
- RB Daniel Lasco (The Woodlands)



KEEP AN EYE ON: Kirbyville's **LaFrederick Ford**. The 6-0, 200-pound bruiser appears to be pretty high on the A&M coaching staff's big board. If the Ags push for an early commit here, they'll probably get it.

PROGNOSIS: Like QB, the Aggies signed a trio of RBs in 2011. As such, look for the A&M coaching staff to be particular here. If they can land Ford in the early going, Sherman and staff will likely either make a run at one of the big boys (Malcolm Brown, Brandon Williams, Aaron Green) or call it quits all together and save the scholarship for a position of need.

WR/TE (3-4)

TARGETS:

- WR **Trey Meteyor** (Whitehouse)
Committed to Oklahoma
WR **Desmond Roland** (Lake Highlands)
WR **Derek Edwards** (Brenham)
WR **Marquis Jackson** (Arlington Heights)
WR **Cameron White** (DeSoto)
WR **Johnny Haynes** (Irving MacArthur)
■ WR **Jonathan Lee** (Allen)
TE **Jace Amaro** (San Antonio MacArthur)
TE **Max Stevenson** (Klein Oak)

KEEP AN EYE ON: Allen's Jonathan Lee. The Aggies have dipped into Allen several times since Mike Sherman's arrival, picking up standouts such as WR Uzoma "EZ" Nwachukwu, DB Steven Terrell and incoming freshman and highly touted OT Cedric Ogbuehi. Don't be surprised to see Lee as one of A&M's earliest commitments in this class if he becomes a priority.

PROGNOSIS: The Ags have replenished the pipeline at WR since Sherman's arrival, so the coaching staff can do some cherry picking this time around if they so choose. As always, speed will be the determining factor when it comes to picking up an Aggie offer, so WRs such as Lee, Marquis Jackson and Cameron White should be ones to watch. The Ags also have a need for a TE or two in this class, and Amaro appears to be the top target. With Texas Tech ties, it will probably be difficult to keep the San Antonio standout away from Lubbock.

OL (3-4)

TARGETS:

- OL **Sedrick Flowers** (Galena Park North Shore)
Committed to Texas
OL **Garrett Greenlea** (Klein Collins)
Committed to Texas
OL **Josh Cochran** (Hallsville)
Committed to Texas
OL **Nathan Gutekunst** (Humble Atascocita)
OL **Spencer Drango** (Cedar Park)
■ OL **Joseph Cheek** (Seguin)
Committed to Texas A&M
OL **Hunter Nealy** (San Antonio Reagan)
OL **Shayvion Hatten** (Daingerfield)
Committed to TCU

KEEP AN EYE ON: Atascocita's Nathan Gutekunst. The 6-6, 290-pound OT is one of the state's best, and following a February unofficial visit to College Station, it appears that the Aggies are in the lead for his services. In fact, don't be surprised to see him listed as a commit by the time the next issue of AI rolls around.

PROGNOSIS: After an outstanding OL haul in 2010, anything in 2011 will be considered icing on the cake. Cheek was the first member of this year's class and happens to be an Aggie legacy. Make no mistake, however, as the Aggie coaches are absolutely ecstatic about Cheek's upside. If Gutekunst joins Cheek as early A&M commitments, Sherman will probably hone in a guard prospect or two to round out the OL class. **AI**

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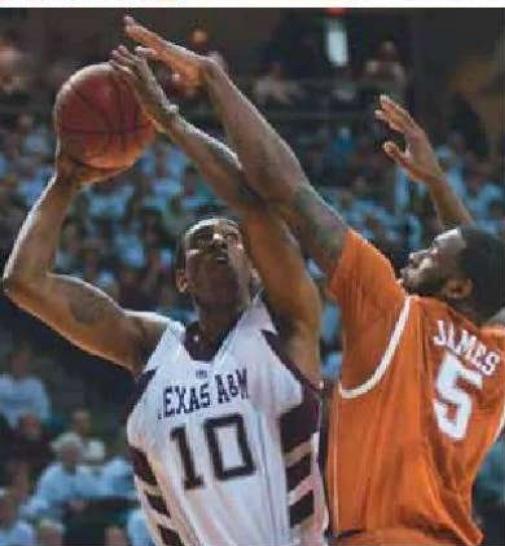
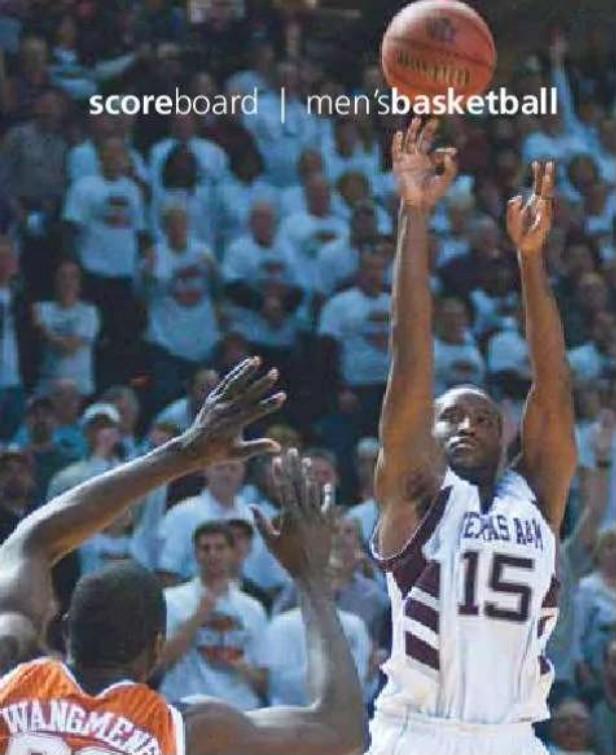
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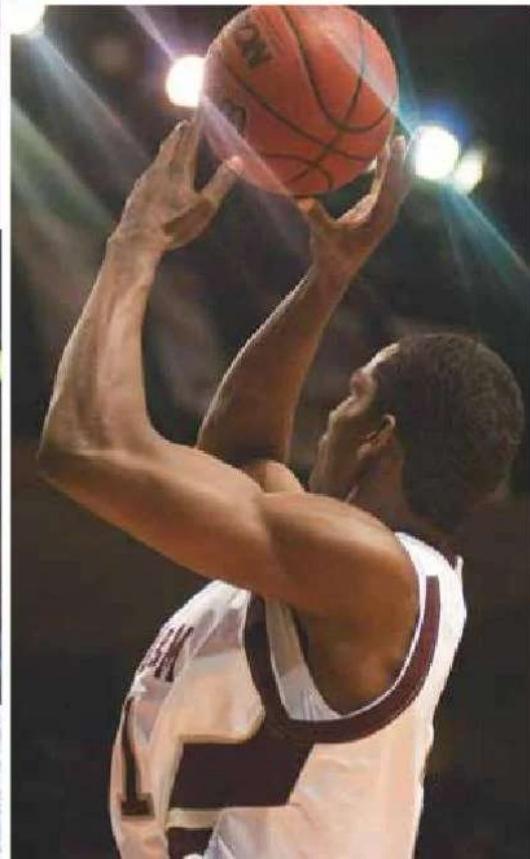
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scoreboard | men's basketball



Not much more can be said about the 2009-10 men's basketball team. With all the trials and tribulations they endured, this group proved that they could take anything thrown at them and persevere. At the beginning of the season, the Ags were expected to finish in the middle of the conference standings. When D-Ro went down, many thought they'd be lucky to make the NCAA tournament at all. Somebody forgot to tell these guys that they were supposed to struggle. Led by seniors Donald Sloan and Bryan Davis, the team continued to win hard-fought game after hard-fought game. When it was all said and done, the Aggies finished tied for 2nd in the Big 12 and 2 points away from the Sweet 16.





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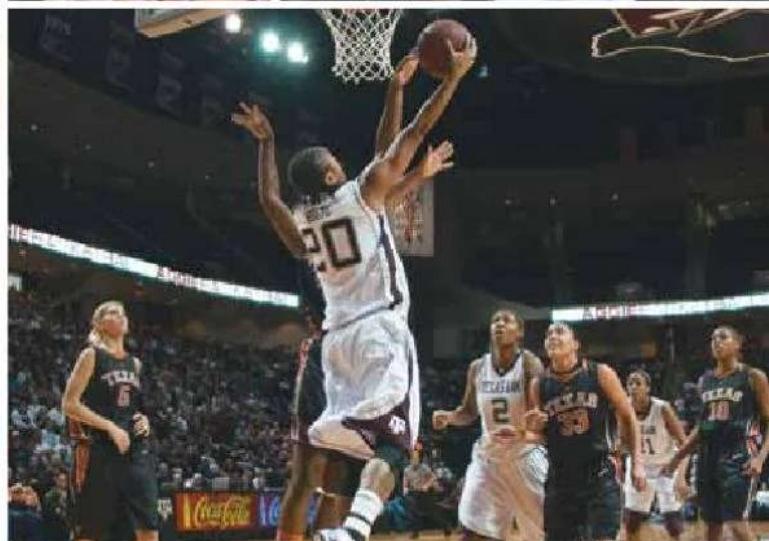


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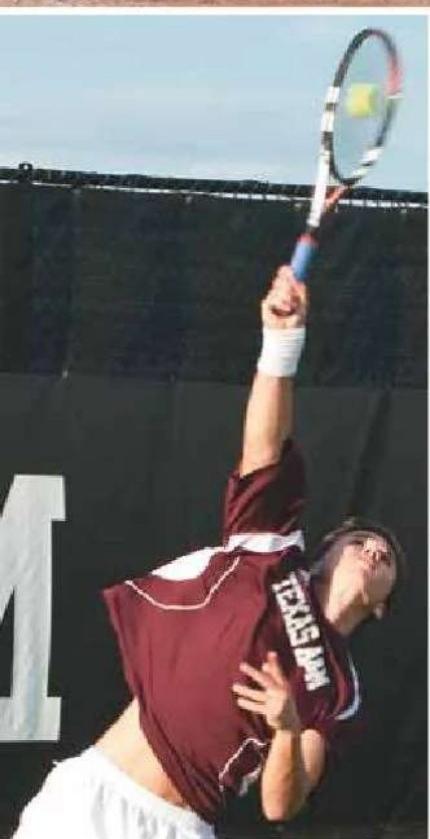
scoreboard | women's basketball



Gary Blair's impressive program continues to reload and play elite level basketball. The Aggies struggled a little during the brutal conference schedule, but showed what they were capable of by winning the Big 12 tournament championship for the second time in three years. Their strong finish earned the Ags a No. 2 seed in the NCAA tournament. Blair got his wish and avoided being placed in the same region as No. 1 overall Connecticut, but he didn't count on having to face a tough Gonzaga team in the second round. The Bulldogs had only lost four games all year, the last coming at the hands of the Aggies in mid-December – a defeat they claimed as the turning point of their season. The second meeting was a back and forth battle all the way to the end. Unfortunately, the Ags were a point short when the final buzzer sounded.



scoreboard | spring sports



(softball) The Aggies are 27-6 and riding an 11-game winning streak with Big 12 play about to begin. (track) The women claimed a fourth consecutive Big 12 Indoor championship, while the men placed third for the second straight year. At the NCAA Indoor championships, the men finished second, while the women placed fifth. (equestrian) The third-ranked Aggie riders finished with a 10-4 record – the program's third 10-win season in four years – and have the Big 12 championships and national championships still on the horizon. (baseball) The 21st-ranked baseball team has won 12 of their last 14 for an overall record of 15-4. (tennis) The men are No. 18 in the nation and continue to climb the rankings as Big 12 play begins, while the women have already begun conference play and are 2-0.





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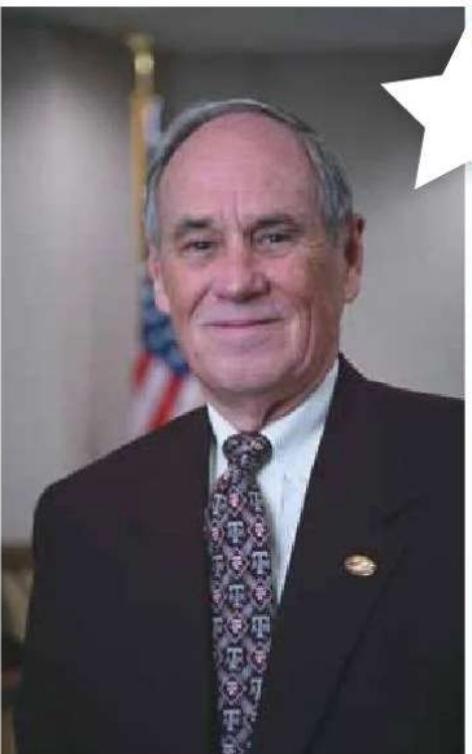
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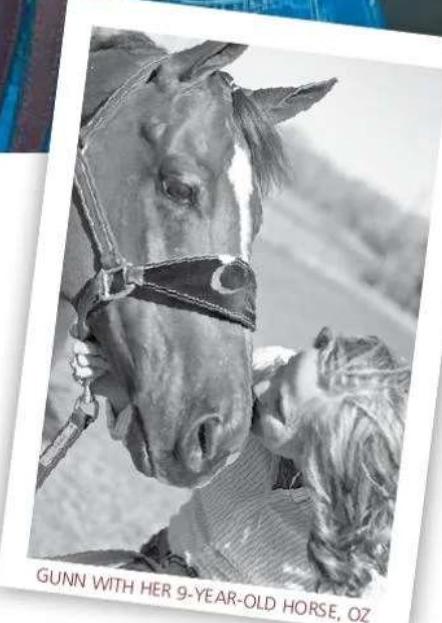
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caroline GUNN

Twelve questions for
the two-time defending
national champion

BY AI STAFF



GUNN WITH HER 9-YEAR-OLD HORSE, OZ

Started Riding

I got started when I was little bitty – probably three or four years old. I have an aunt who has always had horses and she got my sister and I interested in them. My family has always had cattle. We started riding locally in 4H and events like that, and slowly moved up to the level we're at now. I've always been an animal person. I wasn't really a fan of the cattle, but I loved horses from the beginning, and I still do.

From Indiana to A&M

My aunt lives in Collinsville, which is north of Denton, and my uncle is a veterinarian. We would visit them fairly often. Sometimes we would stay two or three months and I just loved Texas. Also, I'm not a fan of cold weather so this worked out well for me. I only visited schools in Texas – with and without equestrian teams. The A&M program wasn't as well known then as it is now.

Keys to Good Horsemanship

I always feel like I'm doing it wrong. I think, "That's not how it's supposed to look!" First and foremost, you just have to go ride your horse. I think a lot of people forget that. They are too worried about how they look or what position they're in. That's the hardest part for incoming freshmen to learn. Just going with the flow and riding the horse. Yeah, you might have the most perfect body position in the country, but if you mess up you're in trouble. Make sure you ride every step – that's what Coach Tana always says.

Messing Up in Competition

Actually, I messed up during the first year at nationals. The first time I went to compete and I was doing a pattern that I helped draw up. I got on the horse – a great horse – went out there and turned the wrong way. I got halfway through my routine and noticed all of the coaches walking away. I just wanted to get out of that arena as fast as I could and find a hole to crawl in. It was absolutely awful. I had been successful all year, so it really surprised everyone. Now, whenever someone messes up, I say, "It's alright. Remember – you aren't at nationals." We did end up winning that year though – barely. But Beth (her coach) did almost kill me that time.

Challenges of Riding an Unknown Horse

The key is to just go with the flow. You can't be overly concerned about things. I kind of do things my own way to begin with. I try to do a lot of mental preparation, which may sound a little silly, but I go through my pattern in my head a million times. But you're riding a thousand-pound animal and who knows how well it is trained. There's a lot of "fly by the seat of your pants" in this sport.

Best Places to Go Ride

We love the Kansas State girls. We always enjoy going there even though it's usually cold and miserable. They are great sports, it's a good competition and we are all friends. South Carolina is a beautiful place and, once again, we're all friends with them. And Auburn is a really great place to go show. They are super friendly.

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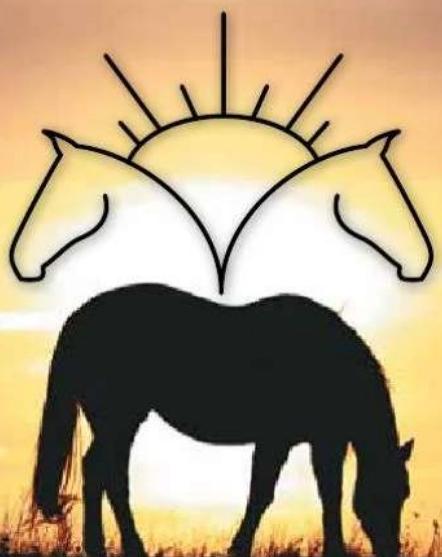
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Time Spent Riding

I spend a lot of time riding. It varies, but we practice three times a week, I have my own horse and I ride one of Beth's when I have time. He's fun. He's not very broke, so that's sort of my project. It's something to do when I'm bored. Normally I'm in the barn four or five hours a day.

Most Memorable Moments

I have a couple. Winning nationals last year, both as a team and as an individual was very special. The whole team went through nationals undefeated, which was really cool. We thought we were a strong team, but that put an exclamation point on it. The first year I won nationals was also special, but the level of competition has come so far since then. You ride against the best people in the country on someone else's horse. So it comes down to who can really ride.

Perfect Ending

I would like to win individuals again. I think I'm leading in the standings right now. I want my team to go out there and be successful. I think we have one of the top western teams in the country. It's my senior year. I want one more ring. That would make it a perfect four rings for four years. And one of the freshmen – Carey [Nowacek] – is a good friend of mine and is currently second in the horsemanship standings. It would be really awesome if she and I could go against each other in the championship round of individual horsemanship. Of course, I plan on beating her if that happens, but it would be cool to show the dominance that Texas A&M has.

Passing the Torch

I definitely feel like I'm passing the torch to Carey. We always laugh because we have a similar build, look the same on a horse and our hats are shaped the same. When we do video review, we have a hard time figuring out who is who. We have to look twice. She's awesome. The whole western team is awesome. They definitely have a bright future.

Riding After A&M

I'm a non-pro, which means I can do just about anything. Equestrian is different than sports like basketball and football. In those sports, if you don't become a professional, you're pretty much done after college. In equestrian, there so many things you can do as a non-pro. There are people just like you who you can compete with – people that don't want to be a professional and rely on horses to make their living. You do it as a hobby. A very very expensive hobby. I call it more of a habit.

Favorite Tradition

There are a lot of great traditions but the Aggie Ring is my favorite. It's almost a status symbol. And everyone notices it. If you're an Aggie, you have your ring on – always. **A1**

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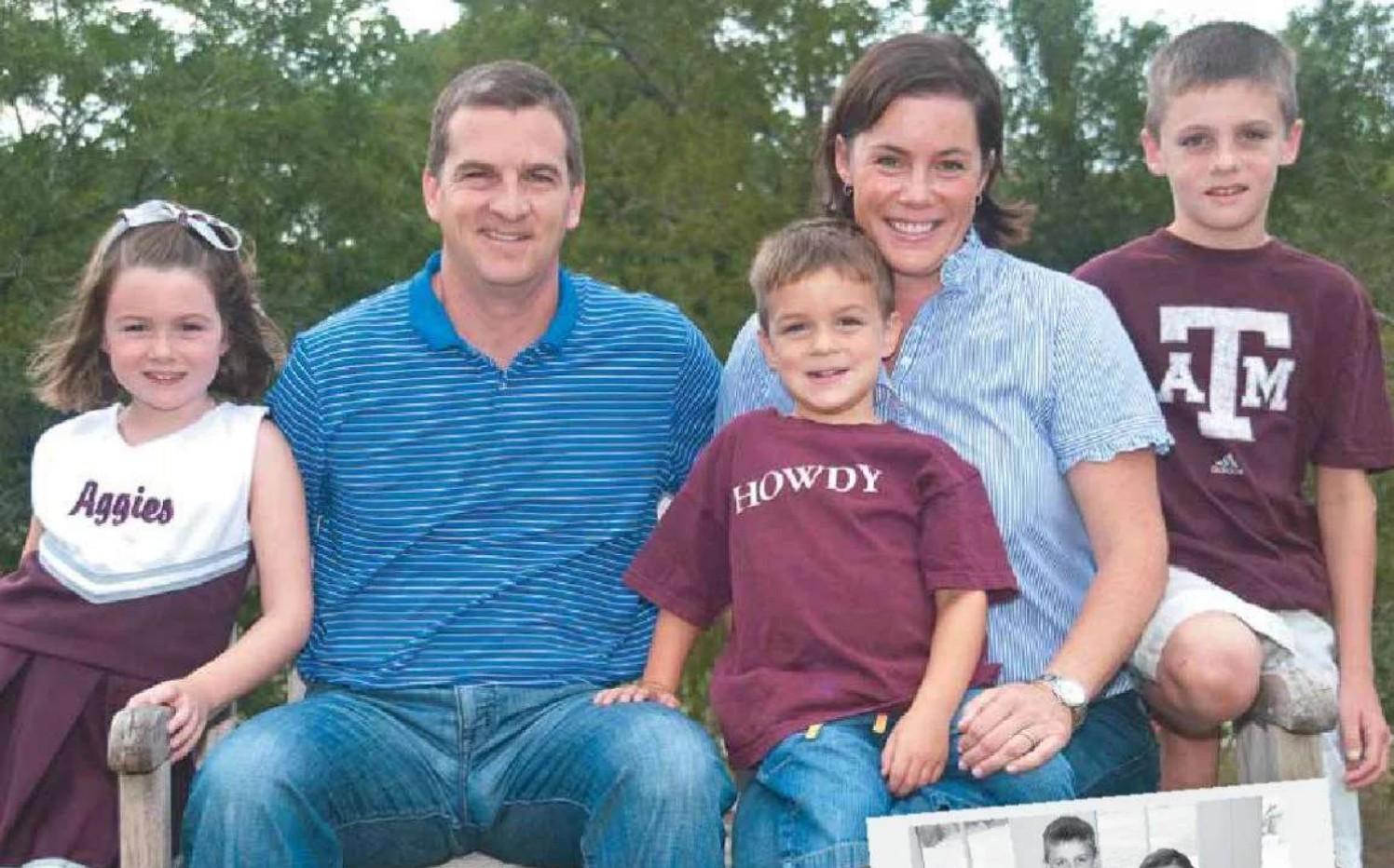
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Mark Turgeon

Nearly four years after moving to Aggieland, the Turgeon family is exactly where they want to be

BY JASON MCCONNELL '01

Most people, at certain points in their lives, make a tough decision to move to a new town for new opportunities. In late spring of 2007, Mark Turgeon was faced with one of those decisions.

For the previous seven years, Turgeon was the head basketball coach at Wichita State University, where he turned the Shockers program into one of the Missouri Valley Conference's best. The third winningest coach in school history, Turgeon led the 2005-2006 Shockers team

to the conference championship and the NCAA Sweet 16, garnering MVC Coach of the Year honors along the way.

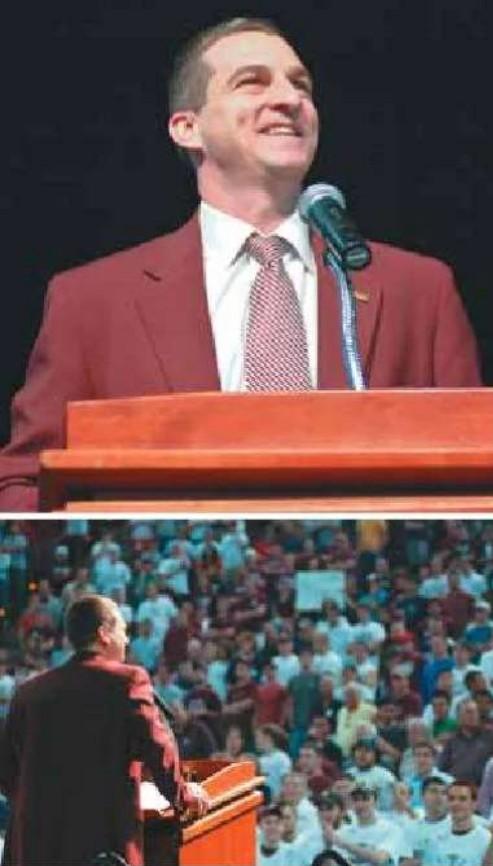
When Turgeon took the job in Wichita, they were averaging about 5,000 fans – including about 50 students – per game. By 2007, there were 1,000 families on the waiting list wanting basketball tickets.

"We didn't have football," Turgeon said, "so we were the sport."

Being the only sport in town, it meant a lot of pressure on the basketball coach.



THE TURGEON FAMILY
MARK, ANN, WILL, ELLA, LEO, RUSSO AND CHARLIE



ON MARCH MADNESS

"The greatest time of the year for me is when February and March roll around. I absolutely love that time of year. I think I coach better. I think our teams play better. One of these years we are going to make a run at it and get it done."

— MARK TURGEON

"By the end of March Madness, I'm going a little mad."

— ANN TURGEON

"When we would lose a game, I felt like I was letting the whole town down," he admits. "It was bigger than just Wichita State. It weighed on me because I wanted to build it up. We could lose two in a row and the next game there would be standing room only. I would be shaking my head thinking these people are incredible. It would make me want to work harder."

But with the good came the bad.

"I couldn't go grocery shopping. Three hundred, sixty-five days a year you are talking about basketball."

A NEW HOME

One thing that Ann, Mark's wife of 16 years, wanted was a new home.

After buying their home in Wichita within a couple of days of taking the job, Turgeon pushed off buying a new home every year.

"I won every argument about it for seven years," he recalls.

But the day they were going to put some money down on some land, Mark answered the call to become Texas A&M's 20th head basketball coach.

For their first year in Aggieland the Turgeons rented a house in Traditions.

"It was the best case scenario," Ann said. "We got to know all the unbelievably good people in Traditions while our

new home was being built."

However, not everyone was sold on the idea of moving to Texas. The Turgeon's eight-year old son, Will, was not keen on leaving his friends in Kansas.

"It is a tough lesson," Ann said to Will at the time, "but a great lesson of life is to realize that you can move and be blessed to have friends back in Kansas, and meet a whole new great group of friends in Texas."

Will also missed one of his favorite spots in Wichita.

"For the first couple months it would be, 'There is no Red Robin,'" Ann recalls. "And I would say, 'Back in Wichita, there is no Aggie football.'"

Turgeon believes that it takes at least two years to feel comfortable after moving.

"I was from Kansas, moved to Wichita, and it took me two years to settle in," he said. "I feel so at home now. Even when we moved into our new offices last year – even though I knew I was the first coach to move into that office – it kind of felt strange because I wasn't in at the ground level. Now I walk into it and I feel like, 'This is my building. What do I want to do with it?'"

A year after moving to Aggieland, the Turgeon's have settled in to their home



"There are a lot of things more important than winning or losing. But let's go out and win anyway."

— MARK TURGEON

in Pebble Creek that Ann helped design. A basketball court littered in toys accents a perfectly manicured backyard overlooking the golf course.



"It is a lot of work, but it has turned out well," Turgeon admits. "I ran a yard service when I was a kid. I told myself if I ever made enough money, I would never mow my yard again. I mowed it the first couple of years when I was in Wichita, but not anymore."

Ann and the kids – Will, Ella and Leo – have settled into their church and have become very active in the community.

"The joy of kids is that you are instantly infiltrated into their friends and church, so we felt at home right away," Ann said. "Once we moved into our house it was even better, because now we are around

a ton of kids who they go to school with and good families. This is a great place to raise kids."

A CULTURE CHANGE

A week or two after finishing his first season in Aggieland – a season that was two points away from a trip to the Sweet 16 – the Turgeon family went bowling. When they walked out of the crowded bowling alley, Ann turned to Mark and said, "You know, I don't think one person in there knew who you were."

Moving from basketball-based Kansas to football-based Texas would take some adjusting.

"We had Kansas at home my first year and there are only 8,000 people here," he recalls. "I knew how good Kansas was and that place should have been packed. For what our program had done the last four years, there should be a little more interest."

It can even be frustrating for a coach with a different mindset.

"We played a game in early January last year against North Dakota – granted, a Division II team, and we were 13-1," he recalls. "Announced crowd was 8,000 but there weren't 2,000 people in the stands. I was off the whole game. That was the one night I had a little pity party for myself."

Turgeon doesn't think he can change years of basketball culture in Texas, but he would like to build on the current culture in Aggieland.

"It is a lot less pressure on me if A&M is a football school," he admits. "As long as I keep taking care of my program and do everything we can to be a top program, that is all I ask."

However, he knows that means investing his time in getting more students and fans to Reed Arena. Before speaking to a group of students in the early fall, one of Turgeon's assistants asked him why he was speaking to the group and not Coach Sherman.

"Sherman doesn't have to do that," Mark replied. "There will be 30,000 students at his first game whether he speaks to them or not. We have to do it right now."

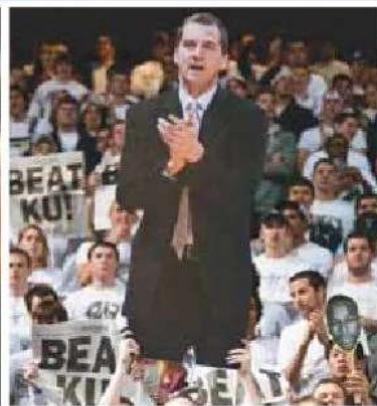
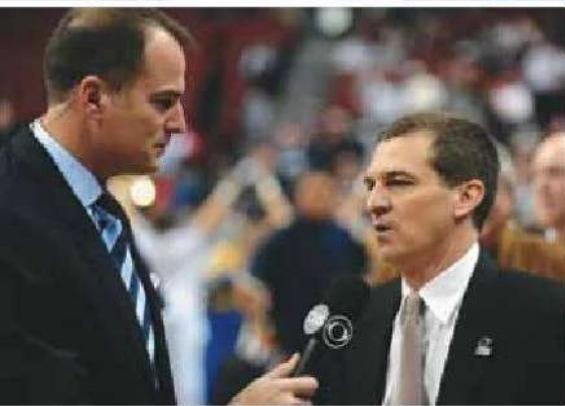
And it is working. The Aggies played in front of four sellout crowds this year, including breaking attendance records three times throughout the season. Turgeon remembers the moment when he knew basketball was getting attention in Aggieland.

"We lost to Oklahoma at home last year, and I was driving home," he recalls. "I was really down because I just felt like we didn't play well early in that game. We should have won that game. But when I got home, I told Ann, 'We can do it here.' Our crowd that day was phenomenal. There is a lot of spirit and there is a lot of pride. Aggies have that. I think that Reed Arena can be really special on game day."

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Any coach coming to Texas A&M after

Turgeon has instilled family with his players, while Aggie fans continue to take their support of the program to higher levels.



A BETTER COACH

"I helped coach Will's first basketball team in Wichita when he was going into the first grade. That was fun. I just drilled them and drilled them. And then of course I had to get on him and he would get upset. But we got better. After one of the games, I asked Will what he thought about the head coach. He replied, 'He is a much better coach than you are, dad.'"

— MARK TURGEON

Billy Gillispie's departure had some big shoes to fill.

"It is not easy to follow a guy that was worshiped," Turgeon admits. "And it is really hard to sustain winning. I am really proud of what we have done. I am proud of how we have recruited. I am proud of what lies ahead."

In basketball, Turgeon has always set lofty goals for himself. He wanted to go to a Final Four as a player. He did. He wanted to take Wichita State to the Sweet 16. He did. And he has big goals for Texas A&M basketball.

"My ultimate vision is to be playing for league championships every year," he said. "If you are doing that, then you are one of the top teams in the country."

"That is one of the things that I think was so enticing about Texas A&M," Ann adds. "You had an opportunity to make a run every year if you play well and finish at the top in the Big 12. You have as good a chance as anybody when that field of 64 comes out."

And while the last few seasons in Ag-

ieland have been good, Turgeon would like to do better.

"I don't like to be mediocre," he admits. "I think that you can look at certain college basketball programs — the great ones with a lot of tradition — and it is hard to get in that mix. Then you have the ones that are above mediocre but without all the tradition. And then you have teams that are pretty good and win 18-23 games per year. I don't want to be one of those teams. I want my program to be one of those other programs."

Building a program the right way takes time and good character kids.

"It is all vision," he said. "Do I have a blueprint? No. I have done it long enough. I do it by feel. I believe in my staff. I think we develop players. I think you will see guys get better."

"I think that is one of his strongest points," Ann adds. "When he coaches a player for four years, when they walk away, graduated, he has made them a better person and a better basketball player. He has made them ready for life — whether it is continuing in basketball or getting a regular job. Graduation, school, how to treat people, character, respect, loyalty... You learn those things from being on his team. I think that is what makes him and Texas A&M work well together."

FAMILY

At home, Ann strives to create a sanctuary for her husband.

"When he comes home from work," she said, "it's not about anything that happened at Reed Arena or basketball. It is about these three kids and how much they adore him."

And often, she carries his stress.

"She gets too into it. She worries too much about wins and losses."

Occasionally, the stress and pressure get to him as well.

"At some point during the year, I feel like, 'I am a bad husband. I am a bad dad. I am a bad coach,'" Turgeon admits. "Because I can't do all three of them the way I want to do them. The one that upsets me the most is being a bad dad."

Being a basketball coach, recruiting is a necessary evil that takes Turgeon away from his family.

"I think it is harder on me than it is on the kids," he admits. "They are so used to it. I have always been on the road for as long as they remember. I think if I would



have raised them to age 12 and then became a recruiter, then it would be hard."

On the road, Turgeon keeps in contact by calling and checking up on Ann and the kids. Sometimes she gets so used to it that she forgets to let him talk to the

ties. During the NCAA and preseason tournaments, Ann, their kids, and other coaches' families get the chance to travel and sightsee.

"Those are very different kind of memories you are creating with your kids," Ann said. "They are opportunities as well as time together."

Both Ann and Mark come from good families, something they say is important to passing on to their children. The Turgeon's take parenting very seriously, and work hard to instill good values in their children.

"I think as parents, our job is to teach them respect, how the world works and a good work ethic," Turgeon said. "If we do our job right, then 20 years from now, they are going to be hopefully living a good life because they have learned how to do it."

And just like in basketball, Turgeon has a vision for their future.

"What I want is for them to all be unbelievably happy 20 years from now," he said. "Unbelievably happy. I can just think of how lucky and fortunate and good my life has been. Whether it has been a college basketball player at Kansas, meeting Ann, getting married, having kids, and then professionally – I am really happy with that. I am really proud of that. I just



kids. Both Will and Emma have been on recruiting trips with their dad.

"The hardest part with recruiting for me is that you never get away from it," Ann admits. "It is a part of his job."

Even on family vacations to escape the Texas summer, Turgeon is still working.

"I take pictures of him to make fun of him because he is off in the corner talking on the phone and we are on the beach," Ann admits.

But being the family of a head basketball coach does offer fun and opportuni-

"Coaching is easy compared to raising kids."

— MARK TURGEON

want them to be the same way."

Looking back on his time in Aggieland, Turgeon reflects on the changes in his life.

"It's been different but it's been good," he said. "I know it sounds crazy, but I feel much less pressure here than I did at Wichita State. I still feel pressure. I am nervous every game. It is my life and I want to be the best."

"But, if we lost a game and I was walking off the court, I just felt like everybody was just staring right at me," he adds. "I felt I had the weight of the town on my shoulders."

He grins.

"Not that they don't care here. I know. When we lose, I get the emails." ■

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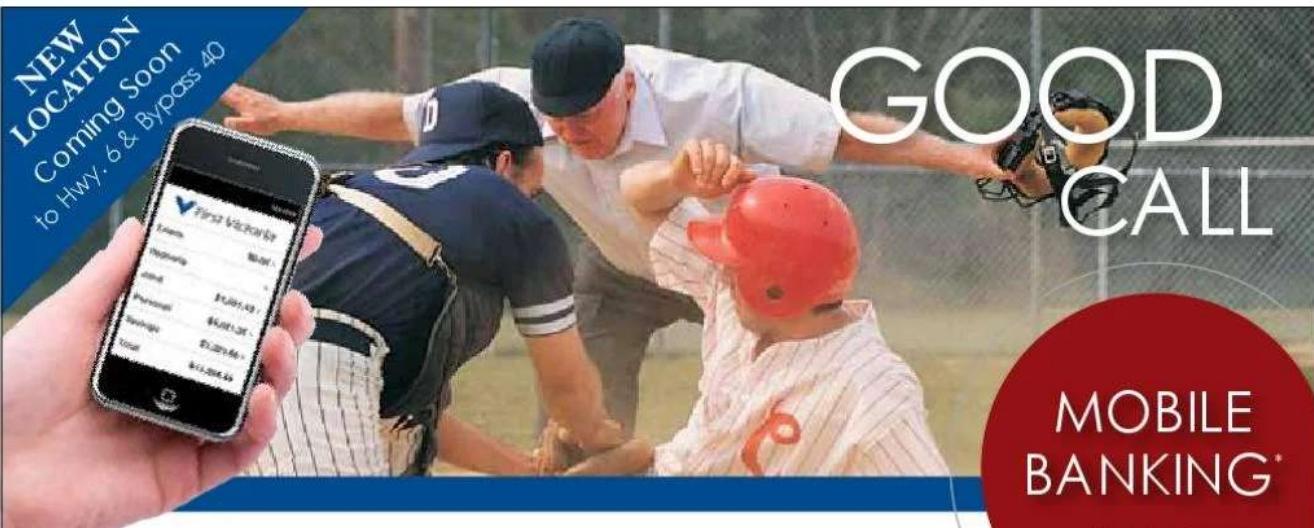
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Macie MORROW

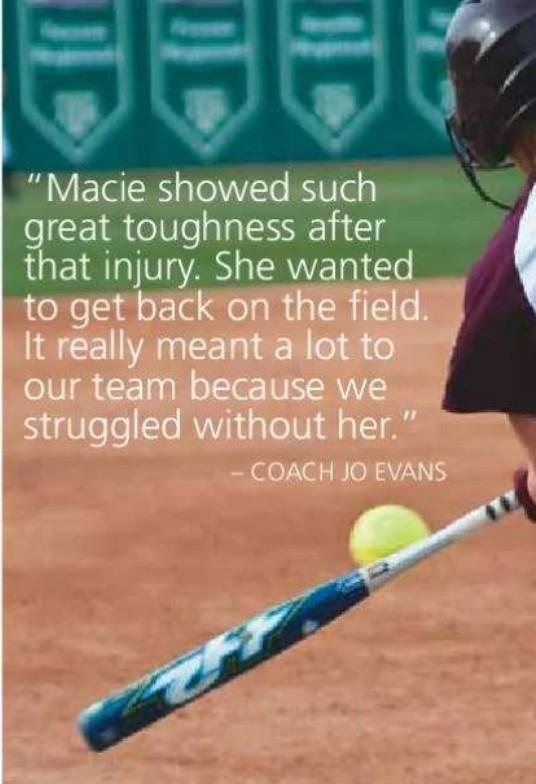
Twelve questions for the Aggies' senior shortstop

BY AI STAFF



"Macie showed such great toughness after that injury. She wanted to get back on the field. It really meant a lot to our team because we struggled without her."

- COACH JO EVANS



Start Playing Softball

I played baseball from machine pitch until almost pony league when my mom made me start playing softball. I was a big tomboy. I didn't start playing softball until I was 11 or 12.

Why A&M

I liked the team. I played with Jamie [Hinshaw] in summer ball and Holly [Ridley] went to my high school. I really liked the coach a lot. I liked that they were good. I liked the school. I was going to take all my visits, but I got tired of the recruiting thing. I came here and I loved it.

Most Memorable Moments

One of them was beating Florida to go to the national championship game two years ago. Another would be the year before beating Florida at home to go to the world series for the first time in 20 years or so.

Overcoming a Severe Eye Injury

It happened during last year's Aggie Classic [late February]. Initially, I had no idea how serious it was. I thought, "That was embarrassing, I just fouled a ball off my face." The pain hadn't set in. I didn't even know I was bleeding. The trainers took me in, X-rayed, and stitched me up. They didn't think it was as bad as it really was. I didn't play in Florida, but I played at home the next week against Nebraska in our conference opener. I felt good. I played well. Then the doctor told me I was going to need surgery, so we went to get a second opinion. He said I was done for the season and told me how bad my eye really was. It was pretty scary and devastating. I wasn't going to get to come back and play. I was coming off such a good sophomore year. I had high expectations for our team, even though most people didn't. It was a big setback. About a month later, the doctor changed his mind and I got to play with a mask. It was pretty awful.





coach jo EVANS

Five questions for
Texas A&M's head
softball coach

BY AI STAFF



Possibility of Not Playing Again

It really more freaked me out. The doctors told me I could go blind. My eye actually sunk in and down in my head. After the surgery, I felt like I would be able to come back and play.

New Appreciation for the Game

I feel like I took it for granted a little bit. I used to think that when I was done, I was not going to miss it. It is something I have done all my life. I didn't think I would be so upset hearing that I was not going to be able to play. It really does make you appreciate everything.

Different Approach

I feel like I have worked a lot harder coming into this year. I wish I would have realized that earlier.

Goals this Season

I want to make my team better. I am one of three seniors and we know what it is like to win and what it takes to go to the world series. We try to instill that to the team and we talk to the freshman about it. We are going to good. I am excited.

Passing on to Younger Players

I hope they see my work ethic. I try to lead by example. I am very competitive and like to win.

Things that People Don't Know

I was born a redhead. My hair is a lot darker now, but you can still see it a little in my roots. And my face was broken.

Life After Softball

I recently decided I am going to apply to law school and see what happens. I want to do something in sports or entertainment.

Favorite Tradition

The 12th Man.

Big 12 Preseason Ranking

It's such a tough conference. First of all, I never worry about where we are ranked. Secondly, it's more about which team is going to get hot in April. I do think we have the depth and talent to compete with anyone. It's just a matter of us being able to put our game together. Obviously, our pitchers are going to have to be really strong because we are going to face some really good hitting teams like Missouri and Oklahoma. It's going to be a challenge for us, but I certainly feel like we are a better team than we were last year. If we play like we're capable of, we should certainly finish higher than sixth place.

Playing Without a Target on Your Back

You have to be consistent even if your team is ranked first and doing really well. You can't get too high on yourself. We honestly never talk about rankings. The only time I know what we are ranked is when the announcer says it before player introductions. I don't even know the web site to go to for rankings. So I think as long as I stay consistent about that, when we aren't ranked high or we aren't projected to do well, our kids don't worry about it.

Keys to Success

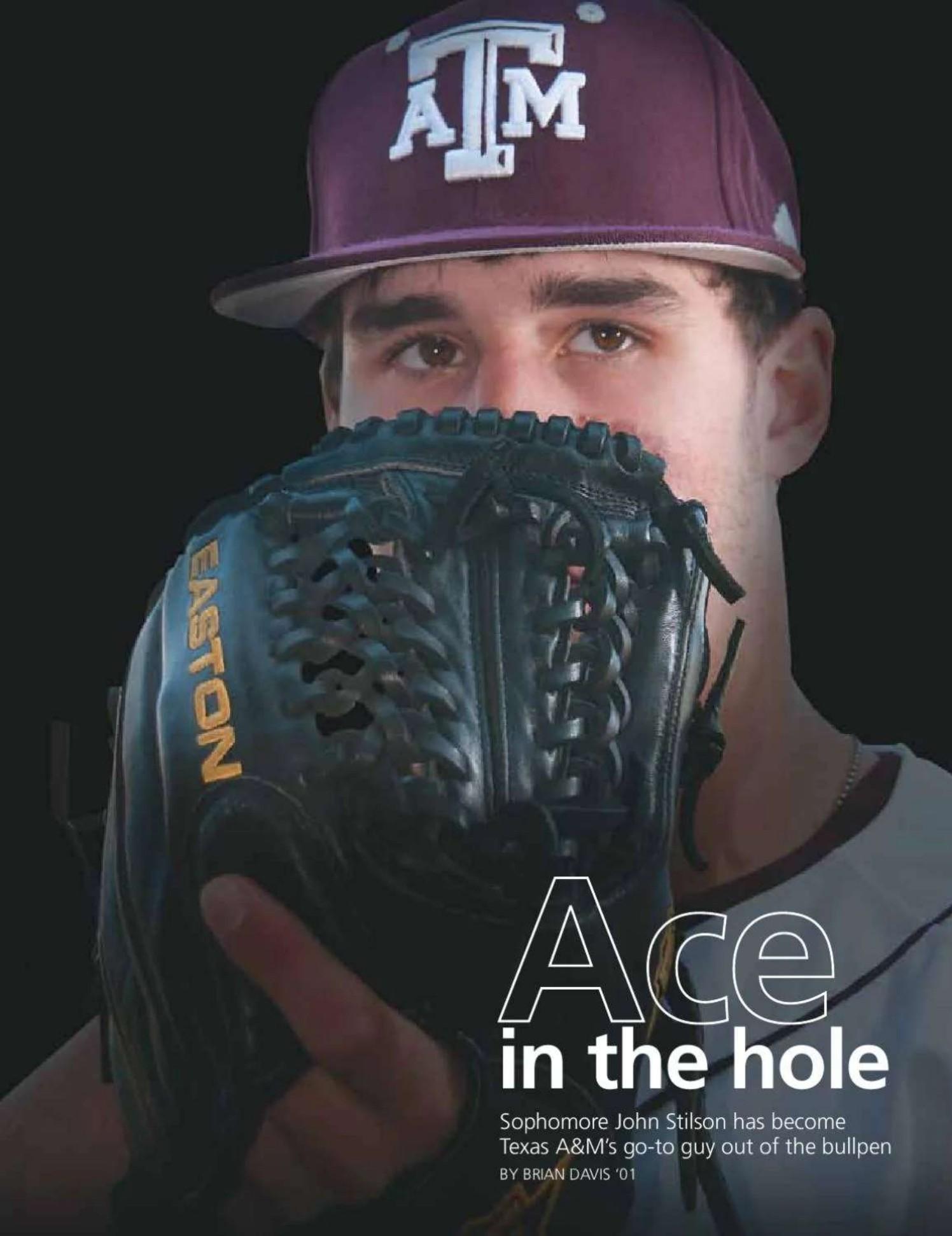
Obviously pitching. They have done a really nice job so far, giving us a chance to win just about every game we've played. Offensively, we've shown the potential to hit all the way through our lineup. We are a better hitting team than we've been in the last couple of years. And defensively, we have to be more consistent. We have some youth on our team and some kids in tough positions. It's a matter of our young players handling the pressure of conference. I still don't think they have any idea of how much tougher it's going to get.

Positives Going into Conference

I've been really pleased with Becca Arbino. I think she's really improved her game from last year. She has really matured as a pitcher. Meagan May, our freshman catcher, is a terrific hitter. With freshmen, you think you've recruited good kids, but you never know for sure until they get here and manage everything. She has handled it very well and is certainly a player to watch. And our seniors have done a nice job setting the tone for us, both offensively and defensively. I've been pleased with our team chemistry, our offensive output and their competitiveness we've shown. We are a completely different team from last year.

Concerns Going into Conference

Mostly it's the consistency – putting all three components together, game in and game out. Some days our pitching is great, but maybe our offense or defense is lacking. We have to keep from beating ourselves to be successful. I think the focus on consistency is a responsibility of our seniors and juniors – how they lead the team and carry themselves, especially if a mistake is made. How are they going to respond to that? If we can take our knocks and roll with them, then we will be fine and have a really good conference season. If we're fragile, it will be a struggle for us.



Ace in the hole

Sophomore John Stilson has become Texas A&M's go-to guy out of the bullpen

BY BRIAN DAVIS '01



When John Stilson was a boy throwing a tennis ball off a brick wall at his grandmother's house, he never imagined he would be pitching for Texas A&M one day. In fact, he didn't think he'd be pitching at all.

Stilson grew up in Hooks, TX before moving to Texarkana, TX at age 12. At Texas High School, Stilson was a three-sport standout, lettering for two years in basketball and three years in football as a wide receiver. Baseball, however, was where his athletic ability shined the brightest. A shortstop with a great glove, Stilson was all-district and all-area in each of his three years on the team.

During his senior year, Stilson injured his non-throwing shoulder playing football, undoubtedly affecting the attention he received from college baseball coaches. However, he still shined in the classroom, earning Academic All-American honors in football and graduating summa cum laude and in the top 10 percent of his class. But when it was all said and done, he had only one scholarship offer to play baseball at Texarkana College (TC).

After undergoing shoulder surgery that summer and recovering in the fall, Stilson began his college baseball career for TC. He was playing shortstop – the same position he had always played – but that was about to change.

"They asked me to start a weekend game because one of our pitchers got in trouble," Stilson recalls, "and I threw a 1-hit shutout. I started pitching regularly after that."

Almost instantly, Stilson became the ace of the Bulldogs' pitching staff, earning all-conference and All-American honors along the way. He tied the school record for victories, finishing 12-1, with an earned run average of 2.44 and 78 strikeouts. When he first started pitching for TC, his fastball was clocked around 89 miles per hour. By the end of the season, he had worked it up to 97. Not bad for a guy who had never really pitched before.

"I have always just messed around pitching ever since I was little and throwing the tennis ball off the wall at my grandmother's house," Stilson said. "I'd throw it like I was pitching, field it like I was a shortstop, and throw it back like I was getting the out at first base. And I've always messed around to see if I could make a ball move this way or that way. That's how I learned all my pitches. I was never taught anything."

After his stellar freshman season at TC, Stilson was widely regarded as the nation's top junior college pitching prospect. This time around, he had scholarship offers from all over. And he had an

"I'll do whatever the team needs me to do. If they need me to come in during the 3rd inning and throw long relief, I'll do it. Just don't expect me to come out."

— JOHN STILSON

opportunity to begin his professional career when the Minnesota Twins selected him in the 19th round of the 2009 Major League Baseball draft.

"They gave me a great opportunity," he admits, "but after visiting Texas A&M, I knew I wanted to be here. It's just an awesome place with great traditions. I immediately fell in love with this place."

Not surprisingly, Stilson impressed coaches and teammates from the start of fall workouts. But his first real opportunity to shine in front of the Aggie faithful came in the third game of the season opening series against Seton Hall.

"My adrenaline was going insane," he said. "That was the main thing Coach Childress and I were worried about. I'm a pretty high-strung guy on the mound. We knew if I could settle down, that I would be just fine."

He was much better than fine. After entering a tied game in the 6th inning, Stilson threw four perfect innings of relief, as the Aggies downed Seton Hall,





6-3, to finish the series sweep. He earned the win in a phenomenal debut on the mound, retiring all 12 batters he faced in order, allowing just two balls out of the infield and striking out five.

"It was amazing," he said. "I couldn't have asked for anything else. I've been waiting on this opportunity for a long time and I'm just thankful I got the opportunity to do it."

"Stilson was just outstanding," Coach Childress said after the game. "It was over when he got in the game."

Stilson credits Coach Childress for his continued development on the mound.

"It's awesome playing for Coach Childress," Stilson said. "He knows exactly what he's talking about and will help you in any way possible. He has helped me tremendously. Everything I'm doing on the mound now is because of him. He has

taught me a lot."

After only a few appearances this season, Stilson's numbers are off the charts. He has raised his fastball up to 99 miles per hour, and he is hoping to throw it even faster.

"I like throwing the fastball," he admits, "because it is consistently 96 or 97 miles per hour, but my favorite pitch is the changeup. Especially when guys are spinning themselves around trying to hit it."

For now, the sophomore right-hander is the Aggies' closer and part-time shortstop. He may even fill in some in the outfield.

"I'll do whatever the team needs me to do," he said. "If they need me to come in during the 3rd inning and throw long relief, I'll do it. Just don't expect me to come out." ■

BIG 12 BASEBALL PREVIEW

Who and what to watch for in the race for the 2010 conference crown

BY SCOTT CLENDENIN '89

Texas A&M, and the rest of the Big 12 teams other than Texas, were not expected to be among the elite of college baseball in 2010. However, heading into conference play, four teams besides the Longhorns found themselves ranked in the top 30 in the country as the league picked up right where it left off in 2009.

The Aggies have shown the best balance in the conference in hitting and pitching, but the defense is still a work in progress. While John Stilson has been the star of the pitching staff, Brodie Greene's senior season has been the key to the team. Last year, Blake Stouffer, Kyle Colligan and Luke Anders had to recover after a slow start to their final season in Aggieland. Greene learned from his former teammates' struggles and hit the ground running this year. He has already been named the Big 12 Player of the Week and is the Ags' leading hitter. Once the players and coaches correct the errors in the field, this team will again compete for the Big 12 crown and the NCAA tournament hosting opportunities that come with finishing in the top of the league standings.

Here is a team by team look at the other schools in the Big 12:



JASON MCCONNELL '01

BAYLOR BEARS



Baylor had big shoes to fill after losing the majority of a recruiting class that was rated the nation's best prior to arriving on campus. Several players who underachieved last year in the scouts' eyes must lead this team, and pitchers like Shawn Tolleson and Willie Kempf must pitch to their potential.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Raynor Campbell is having a huge senior season, a big bounce back from a junior season that saw him post career low numbers. He has moved from the bottom of the Bear order to the top to take advantage of his batting prowess.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: After a slow start, the Bears have picked up steam with the offense, but they are still struggling defensively. Three new defenders on the infield have to come together and cut down on the free baserunners.

MISSOURI TIGERS



Missouri is routinely underrated in the pre-season, and this year they found themselves rated near the bottom of the conference. No team north of the sunbelt has had the run of professional pitching prospects that the Tigers have produced in the past five years. This year has seen the pitching staff come back to the pack.

PLAYER TO WATCH: After an all-conference sophomore season, Aaron Senne struggled last year and is looking to bounce back in 2010. He is off to a solid start, but still looking for the groove he found in 2008.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: The Tiger offense is struggling with the second lowest batting average in the Big 12 and has fewer extra base hits than any other team in the conference. Their lack of speed might contribute to being a singles hitting team in 2010.

OKLAHOMA ST. COWBOYS



Oklahoma State was hurt by late draft defections, and that talent drain left many questions about the team entering this season. Most have no idea what direction the team will head this year. The Cowboys have played a weak non-conference schedule due to weather altering several series, and they have played fewer games than any team.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Tyler Lyons turned down the New York Yankees after being drafted in the tenth round last year. He led the Cowboys in wins and was named to the all-tournament team at the Clemson Regional.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: The Cowboy offense has taken off in recent seasons after beating up on outmatched opponents. They have great numbers again this season, but could struggle against Big 12 pitching.

KANSAS JAYHAWKS



Kansas entered the season with high expectations, the best returning player in the league and confidence after a solid season in 2009. Winning two of three from defending national champion LSU the week before conference play has them confident they can make a run to the league crown.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Tony Thompson led the Big 12 in hitting, homeruns and RBI last year, but he hasn't hit the field this year after fracturing his kneecap in preseason practice. Kansas withstood the absence, but when Thompson returns to form, their middle of the pack offense could explode.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: Without Thompson, the Jayhawk offense has not shown much power or speed. Most teams in the league can either bash the ball or steal bases, but Kansas is last in the league in both.

KANSAS ST. WILDCATS



Kansas State was the biggest surprise in the Big 12 last year, and most thought the Wildcats would take a big step back after losing star players in the field and on the mound. Former Aggie assistant coach Andy Sawyers continues to force the issue with an aggressive offensive attack, making them the best at hitting as well as running the bases.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Carter Jurica was a key player in their offense last year, but as a returning starter he has taken his game to another level. He is in the top five in hitting, RBI, triples, doubles and steals.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: The Wildcats lost the best pitcher in the conference last year, and while Kyle Hunter has been solid to start the season, the rest of the pitching staff still has more questions when the level of competition increases.

NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS



Nebraska has been slowly sliding down the conference rankings since Rob Childress left for Aggieland, and they were predicted to finish in the bottom of the league standings in 2010. After dominating the midwest recruiting scene and supplementing it with select players from the Texas JUCO ranks, the talent pipeline to Texas has slowed to a trickle.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Adam Bailey started strong last year but struggled against Big 12 pitching. He is their top hitter again this year and after spending some time in the bullpen, he is concentrating on just hitting this year.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: The team's earned run average has steadily risen in the past five years, and they need to cut that down while this pitching staff gains experience as the year progresses.

OKLAHOMA SOONERS



Oklahoma was expected to be one of the top four teams this season and has done nothing to diminish those expectations. One of just three teams to rank in the top four in hitting and pitching in the Big 12, the Sooners have a chance to host in the NCAA tournament for the second straight year.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Garrett Buechele was the Big 12 Freshman of the Year last year and is even better this year at the plate as the cornerstone of the Sooner offense. The son of former Ranger Steve Buechele plays the game with a big league attitude and skill set.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: The Sooners were among the top fielding teams in the Big 12 last season, but losing three of four infielders has put the focus on Buechele and how the infield progresses as the season advances.

OKLAHOMA ST. COWBOYS



Texas Tech is rebuilding under Dan Spencer, and after helping lead Oregon State to back to back National Championships, he has a great pedigree as a pitching coach to help get the job done. The Red Raiders were better last year than their record indicated, but a slow start in 2010 could lead to another season out of the Big 12 tournament.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Chad Bettis doesn't have a defined role, moving back and forth from starter to reliever in each of the last two years. He is projected to go in the first three rounds of the professional draft, but his lack of a defined roll keeps his on field performance out of the star watch.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: With Spencer's background it is surprising that his pitching staff has not come together as much as their offense in his two seasons as head coach. **AT**

TEXAS LONGHORNS



Texas returned the top pitching staff in the country, earning them a preseason #1 ranking. Many thought the questions surrounding a struggling offense would be answered this year. Instead, their offense has regressed with the loss of key upperclassmen from last year's national runner-up team.

PLAYER TO WATCH: Taylor Jungmann would have been drafted in the top two rounds out of high school based on his potential, and he has built on that to be one of the top pitchers in the country. Moving an All-American candidate in Chance Ruffin out of his Friday night slot, Jungmann will be a premier draft pick next year.

WHAT NEEDS WORK: Their offense has struggled against frontline pitching staffs so far. Even the best pitching staff will need better offensive support to be successful.

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von
MILLER (SR)

10 THINGS TO WATCH FOR DURING SPRING FOOTBALL PRACTICE

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

It's hard to believe spring football is already upon us. This spring marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Mike Sherman era. After another year of below average defense, Sherman brought in highly acclaimed defensive coordinator Tim DeRuyter from Air Force to resurrect the Wrecking Crew. While that might be priority number one this spring, it certainly isn't the only storyline worth following. Here are our top 10 things to look for as the Ags hit the practice fields this spring:

VON MILLER'S ENCORE

There probably isn't a more encouraging story this spring than Miller's return. After all, it isn't every day that A&M returns the nation's sack leader and a first team All-American. Miller's senior leadership and intensity will undoubtedly be infectious to the rest of the young Aggie defenders.

COACH NGUYEN

If Miller's return is the most encouraging storyline, the return of Dat Nguyen has to be the most exciting. After a stint as an assistant coach for the Dallas Cowboys, Nguyen was hired by DeRuyter to be the new inside linebackers coach – the same spot where he earned All-American accolades as a player.

THE 3-4 SHUFFLE

With DeRuyter comes a new defensive scheme, and most Aggie fans will be excited to see the return of the 3-4 front. The scheme that made RC Slocum so successful should allow the Ags to put more speed on the field. Several players should find a new lease on life with a different front, including defensive tackles Rod Davis and Adren Dorsey.

FRESH FACES

A trio of freshman quarterbacks and a highly touted offensive lineman are ready to make their mark in spring drills. Freshman tackle Luke Joeckel was one of the most highly rated members of the class of 2010. If he's anywhere near as good as advertised, he'll probably be in the starting unit by the end of spring drills. Matt Joeckel (Luke's twin brother), Clay Honeycutt and Jameill Showers will fight to prove themselves as a worthy backup to Jerrod Johnson so that Ryan Tannehill can see more time at wide receiver.

WHAT TO DO WITH TANNEHILL

After spending limited time at wideout at the beginning of the year, an injury to Jeff Fuller pushed Tannehill into more playing time, where he continued to put his athleticism on display. While he might still be the best backup quarterback on campus, Tannehill has clearly proven himself as a weapon at receiver. Will any of the freshman quarterbacks allow Tannehill to see more playing time, or will he continue to be protected?

REPLACING SENIORS

Though they were few in number, the departing seniors will be tough to replace. Lee Grimes, Michael Shumard and Kevin Matthews became staples on the offensive line, and after a rocky start, emerged as one of the Big 12's best units toward the end of the season. That type of chemistry will be tough to replace, and there's not much experience returning to replace them. Defensively, ends Matt Moss and Matt Featherston leave a void as Von Miller's pass rushing compliments, and safety Jordan Pugh was the team leader in interceptions.

PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION

Strength coach Dave Kennedy arrived at the same time as Sherman, and while his impact may have been obvious with some players right away, there's a buzz surrounding the program that says the effects are beginning to show across the board. We know, we know...people say this every year, but this time we really think there's some truth behind it.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Coach Kirk Doll wasn't retained at season's end, and while there isn't a new special teams coach to introduce, we think it's still worth keeping a close eye on the all-important area this spring. Sherman has indicated that a conscious effort will be put on special teams by all, which has to come as good news.

KRAGTHORPE'S RETURN

Former Louisville head coach Steve Kragthorpe finds himself back in Aggieland after an unsuccessful stint in Kentucky. We're thrilled with the hire, as Coach Krag's misfortune of walking into Petrino's mess ultimately proved to be A&M's gain. Kragthorpe's tutelage of the wide receivers and influence on offense should turn out to be a win-win scenario for the Ags.

DERUYTER IN ACTION

We know we mentioned it, but it's worth saying again. If DeRuyter can lead the Air Force Falcons to the 11th ranked defense in the country, then surely he's capable of resurrecting the sleeping giant in Aggieland. It's been too long since the stands of Kyle have chanted "Wrecking Crew." Hopefully, this spring marks step one toward the Crew's triumphant return. ■



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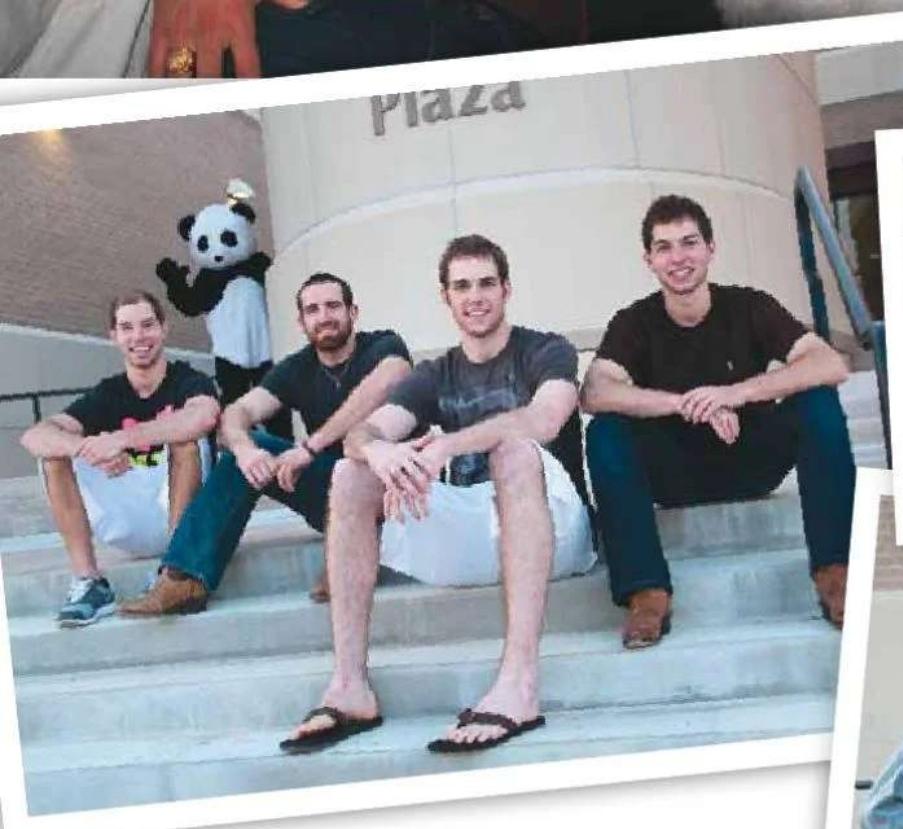
the12thman



(above left and bottom right) The 12th Man set the single game record at Reed Arena three times this season. (above right) The Aggie Dance Team performs during halftime of the women's game against Kansas State. (left) For the fourth-straight season, A&M fans were decked out in pink T-shirts for the Aggies' BTMO Breast Cancer game. (bottom left) On Senior Night, fans paid tribute to Colin Killian, who has accepted a job with the City of College Station after over 20 remarkable years as sports information director for men's basketball.



DUDE PERFECT: CODY JONES '10,
CORY COTTON '10, THE PANDA,
CORY COTTON '10, TYLER TONEY '11
(NOT PICTURED: SEAN TOWNSEND '10
AND GARRETT HILBERT '10)



Fourteen questions for the Dude Perfect guys and their newest member – the panda

BY GENTRY "SCOOP" WOODARD

How did Dude Perfect get started?

Tyler: It started unintentionally, actually. We are all very competitive guys and we were out in the backyard one day and I bet one of our roommates that I could make a shot from across the yard. I ended up making it and we decided to catch some on film – really just for us and our families. After we put out the first video, it just snowballed from there.

Why Dude Perfect?

Cory: We're all roommates and there were six of us to start out with. Sean is now attending medical school at Texas Tech. He was the one who said it first. He and Tyler were in the backyard goofing off and they just wanted to call it something. Sean sat the camera down on the rail of our deck and when he came around to look through it, they were both in frame and he said, "Dude Perfect." So we kept the original audio from that moment and felt no reason to change it after that.

Who comes up with the ideas for the trick shots?

Cory: I have to admit, most of our creative ideas come from Tyler and we shoot down about 99 percent of them. But a few of them are great. The Kyle Field shot was his idea. We were driving around campus and he said, 'I think I can make it from the top of the stadium.' And I told him that was the dumbest thing I had ever heard. We asked the athletic department and they were very generous and gave us the key to the stadium for the day.

What was life like when the Kyle Field video really started spreading?

Cory: It was really crazy. Coby and I were on our way to North Carolina to visit our family. The Kyle Field video had been online for four or five days. We knew it was a cool video, but we thought it was going to get better attention than it had up to that point. We hopped on the plane for a 2-3 hour flight and when we landed, our phones had exploded with messages.

Where did the Dude Perfect Panda come from?

Tyler: We were sitting around our living room and I decided we needed a mascot. We had seen a video about fainting goats and I thought that would be a cool mascot to keep in our backyard. Their defense mechanism is to stiffen up and fall over. It wasn't the most practical though considering that it's difficult to find a fainting goat costume. So we went online and figured out that a panda was not overly used. It had a good balance of cute and you could still do things with it. So we decided to order the costume from China. Every great team has a mascot.



What is it like to wear the panda costume?

Cory: When you put on the panda costume you kind of become the panda no matter who you are. When you put it on, you can pretty much get away with whatever you want. The most important thing you need is a panda spotter, because seeing out of it is like looking through a straw. If you're running down the aisle at a basketball game and people stick their hands out for a high-five, you can't see them without the panda spotter.

Cody: The panda can show up about two minutes before game time and everyone parts the seas for him.

Tyler: The panda got a standing ovation at the last home game.

Cody: And there were a lot of "Pandamonium" signs at the game.

Who is the panda's favorite Aggie basketball player?

Tyler: It would have to be B.J. Holmes because he's been there from the beginning for the Kyle Field shot. He had to leave for class while we were working on it and we have video of him sprinting off to class because he waited until the last possible second. Then he left class early to come back.

Cody: We made it just after he got back. He was the X-factor.

What has been your favorite moment from this basketball season?

Cory: Probably the Texas game as a whole. It was a fun experience.

Tyler: Non-game related would have to be the Panda behind Bobby Knight on ESPN.

Where does the panda live?

Tyler: He lives with us in College Station. He's low maintenance and he's a champion at life. His favorite food is Panda Express, naturally. We have to take him there quite often. That will be a video eventually.

Cory: The panda does not talk. Well, he talks to us.

Tyler: And we can relay that information.

Does the panda have a girlfriend?

Cory: Right now, he's single.

Cody: I don't think he's ready to mingle. He's living the celebrity status.

Cory: The sky's the limit for the panda. He's fun-loving.

Is the panda on Facebook or does he tweet?

Cory: Yes, the panda did recently get a Facebook page (Panda-Dude-Perfect). He doesn't have a Twitter page yet, but he will be getting one soon.

Does the panda have any special skills or talents?

Cory: The panda is actually incredibly talented. He is a great drummer. He can longboard.

Tyler: He is talented at everything he does. He is a lot better than us.

Cody: We captured him and as we are training him we realize that he is better than us at everything.

Cory: He's far more likeable than we are.

Cody: The panda is a force.

Does the panda have any weaknesses?

Tyler: His weakness is popcorn. That's his kryptonite.

Cody: He needed a weakness and he needed a way to be captured and popcorn was a natural fit.

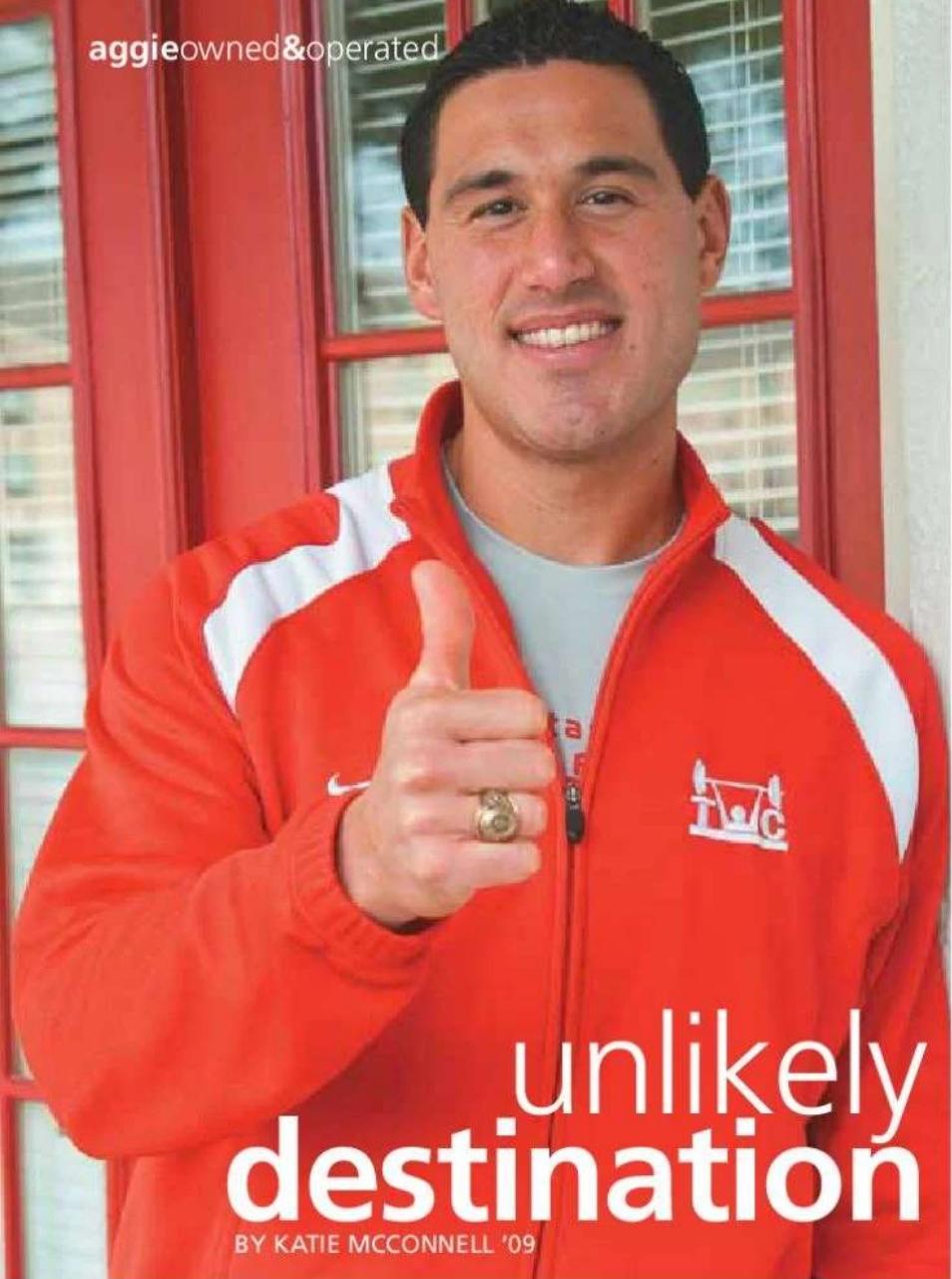
Will the panda be attempting any trick shots in future Dude Perfect videos?

Tyler: We plan to have the panda more involved with the trick shots, but we felt like he needed an introduction and a back-story first.

Cody: He will definitely shoot and if he doesn't, I feel like he will be in the background or something. **AJ**



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BY KATIE MCCONNELL '09

Anyone who has ever spent time with Charlie Lima '04 would know that he is a driven and passionate person. It's rare to find someone who genuinely loves their job, but for Charlie, his job has become his life.

Being the founder and owner of Train With Charlie, Charlie admits that he never thought he would ever be a personal trainer. But, he says "everything happens for a reason," and credits God for the path his life has taken.

As a kid, Charlie was overweight, and he lived up to the label of "chubby" that his family and friends had given him.

"I had horrible eating habits until I was

about 18," he said.

Until then, his life had consisted of fast-food and soda.

"I thought that a restaurant was good if it had free soda refills," he adds.

And even though he had grown up playing football and loved the sport, he hated the exercise it required.

At the end of his senior year at Cypress Creek HS, and with a college decision looming around the corner, Charlie had every intention of going to the University of Texas in Austin.

"I didn't know much about Texas A&M at the time," he admits. "I wasn't one of the ones who grew up going to games at

"Going to A&M was the biggest blessing and the best decision I think I've ever made in my entire life. God put me here for a reason."

- CHARLIE LIMA

Kyle Field. I just planned to go to Texas."

Although Charlie intended to lead a healthier lifestyle going into college, it wasn't until he had received his acceptance letter to Texas that he really began to make a change.

"I probably ran three or four miles that day just off endorphins," he recalls. "I was so excited to get into Texas."

However, after a short trip with some friends to College Station for a concert, Charlie began giving Texas A&M a second thought.

"I came into town on another visit and stayed with some friends that went to A&M," he said. "I realized that College Station wasn't so bad."

It was May of his senior year when Charlie changed his mind and decided to go to A&M.

"I told my dad and he was a little in shock," Charlie admits. "We had already committed to a dorm at Texas and I had a roommate set up. I had everything in line to go to Austin."

"Turns out," Charlie adds, "going to A&M was the biggest blessing and the best decision I think I've ever made in my entire life. God put me here for a reason."

While at A&M, Charlie had nothing short of a unique college experience.

"Because I was so late in my decision to come to A&M, I was moved into Hart Hall, which, at the time, was the only remaining dorm without air-conditioning," he said. "But it was worth it – even during a College Station summer."

Charlie ran for yell leader twice during his time at A&M, which is a difficult task for anyone who is not in the Corps of Cadets.

"I discovered that running for yell was a lot like owning a business," he said. "There's a lot of marketing and work that goes into the campaign."

The summer after his sophomore year, Charlie began working various jobs around Aggieland. He mowed lawns and bussed tables at Wings-N-More, hoping

to work his way up to waiter. He was also spending a lot of time at Nutritec – a supplement store in College Station – where he met personal trainer Cliff Latham, who trained clients in the back of the store.

"I was in there one time and I don't think he knew my name, but he recognized my face," Charlie recalls. "He said to me, 'I'm about to buy the store and I need people to run it. You look like a good guy. Do you want to work for me? I'll pay you \$8 an hour.' That was more than I was making at Wings-N-More, so it was an easy decision."

Charlie began working the front counter and often visited with Latham's clients before and after their sessions. One client – Mary Mike Hatcher – told Latham that if he ever wanted to grow his business, she thought Charlie would make a good personal trainer.

"He gave me an opportunity to be a personal trainer and it just came natural to me," Charlie said. "It just grew from there."

Shortly after college, Charlie began working as an independent trainer at Aggieland Fitness Dome.

"During my campaign for yell leader, I had heard that red was a 'power color,'" he recalled. "So I started wearing a red shirt anytime I would train clients just so that I would stand out. Not too long after I began doing that, I had people asking around, wanting to train with 'the guy in the red shirt.'"

It worked so well that he made red the official color of Train With Charlie. But, it has always been Charlie's devotion that has set his business apart.

"I trained all the time," he said. "I think it's because I took it so seriously that I have a successful business today."

Soon, Charlie had so many clients that he needed to hire another trainer. Business continued to grow leading Charlie and his trainers to move out of Aggieland Fitness Dome and into his own location that he acquired from friends and owners of Expression's Dance Studio.

Train With Charlie opened its doors in August 2008. Since then, Charlie has developed a successful business, facilitated healthy living and has achieved his dreams. He also recently opened a second location called College Station CrossFit. For Charlie, what started as a simple hobby, became his life. **A**

YOU CAN BE FIT – 7 EASY STRATEGIES FOR TAKING BACK YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW

By Charlie Lima. ©2008

Charlie's 7 Easy Fitness Strategies:

1. **Mentally commit** to the healthy body you really want and schedule fitness into your lifestyle.
2. **Set realistic goals** with interim benchmarks based on a practical fitness plan.
3. **Target the flag**, ignoring all obstacles along the way.
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5. **Do it right** the first time, cutting through the myths and choosing a sensible path to fitness.
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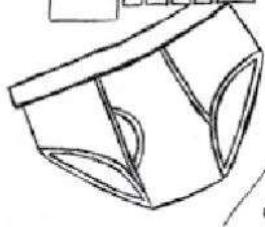
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Aggies everywhere were elated in mid February when Mike Sherman announced three new members of his coaching staff. And while Steve Kragthorpe and Nick Toth appear to be outstanding hires, neither can compete with the buzz around former Texas A&M All-American Dat Nguyen as the new inside linebackers coach. Eager to prove his value not only as a teacher of the game, Nguyen quickly hit the ground running on the recruiting trail.

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